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SUBJECT: MFA MAKES CASE FOR ANTI-TIP EFFORTS

**¶1.** (SBU) In separate April 5 discussions with Turkish MP Egemem Bagis and MFA Director General of Consular Affairs Murat Ersavci, the Ambassador raised concerns about the GOT's silence on specific anti-trafficking efforts. The Ambassador engaged Bagis and Ersavci on repeated requests for information on 1) efforts to establish a shelter for victims of trafficking; 2) efforts to coordinate law enforcement and prevention measures with TIP source countries; 3) adoption of standards for humane, thorough screening of victims; and 4) a comprehensive, anti-trafficking public relations campaign. Both Bagis and Ersavci asserted the GOT was "galvanized" against TIP, and would work to provide Post with details of the GOT's anti-TIP efforts.

**¶2.** (SBU) Ambassador Murat Ersavci, Turkish MFA Director General of Consular Affairs responded with the following Aide-Memoire. Begin text:

The Government of Turkey attaches great importance to the fight against trafficking in human beings.

The statement made by Mr. John Miller, Senior advisor to Secretary of State Colin Powell on human trafficking and Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons at the US Department of State, that "Turkey is one of the countries which really stepped up in the fight against trafficking in human beings", at the online active forum of the White House on March 22, 2004, was appreciated.

Turkey has accomplished concrete progress in combating trafficking in human beings since it was moved from Tier 3 to Tier 2, on September 2003. By adopting and implementing international instruments, Turkey clearly indicated her political will and determination to combat against trafficking in human beings in co-operation with the world community and translated the provisions included therein into its own legislation.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs chairs the National TIP Task Force, which is composed of experts from relevant ministries and non-governmental organizations. The main strategy and policy on the fight against human trafficking has been formed within this Task force.

Further co-operation possibilities are considered particularly with the International Organization of Migration (IOM) on a project basis in areas of awareness raising, training of law-enforcement bodies, national referral mechanisms, victim protection, voluntary return and reintegration assistance. Moreover, Ministry of Interior signed a protocol on 4 September 2003 with the Foundation for the Development of Human Resources (IKGV), a well-established NGO that actively involves in projects aimed at improving social and health conditions and assists to victims of trafficking in human beings.

The Turkish Government, despite its limited resources, provides, if necessary, accommodation and emergency services including psychiatric services, out of national budget and funds. To this end, the Ministry of Health made the necessary arrangements in order to provide medical treatment free of charge to victims of trafficking in human beings. A decree to this effect became effective in January 2004.

Victims of trafficking are provided with safe, secure and free accommodation in various facilities, including

shelters for battered women, student dormitories, hotels and government guesthouses. However, it is estimated that as a result of the consultations between Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and IKGV under the guidance of MFA it would be possible to provide a shelter for the victims of trafficking within the following months.

On January 2, 2004, the Ministry of Interior established a specialized unit dealing with trafficking cases, ensuring better dialog and co-ordination between the police and other relevant authorities dealing with human trafficking. Moreover, a Twinning Project on "Strengthening Institutions in the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings" has been developed under the European Union 2003 Pre-accession Financial Assistance Programme.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Security prepared a sample contract in Turkish and in the language of the applicant for working permit. The sample contract includes clauses on the working conditions, such as the minimum wage. The emergency number: of the police and the IKGV are also included in the contract.

Turkey is already cooperating with other countries against the inhuman and criminal practice of trafficking, as well as with the US Government. Turkey has proposed bilateral co-operation and a draft protocol on cooperation in combating trafficking in human beings to the main countries of origin, whose nationals target Turkey in search of better standards of living and some of them become vulnerable to exploitation. So far, positive responses from Belarus and Ukraine have been received. In source countries, Turkish missions have expanded their activities in order to cooperate within the framework of the said protocols.

As a result of an operation organized by the Directorate of Security of Erzurum, 11 persons have been arrested and 9 of them have been sent to Court, 3 of whom were police officers. An investigation was launched about those 3 police officers. After their trial, 2 police officers were sentenced to 6 months of imprisonment and heavy fines. They are also expelled from the force. One police officer has been acquitted. Moreover, Yalova Criminal Court issued a verdict (according to Article 201/b of the TPC) for five defendants on February 11, 2004, four of whom have been confined to imprisonment of 4 years and 2 months and a fine of 1.325.000.000. - TL. The accused persons are prohibited from employment in public services for 3 years.

It is a fact that since the last evaluation there has been considerable progress. Turkey will continue to fight against this scourge. Therefore, the Government of Turkey would be most appreciative of the valuable support and firm standing of US Government is provided against any pressure groups, which would like to see Turkey placed in Tier 3, thereby defining the Government of Turkey once again as "not in full compliance with minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and not making significant efforts".  
End Text.

EDELMAN